

California Corbina (*Menticirrhus undulatus*)

Status of the Population:

Population estimates have not been made for California corbina. Beach seine hauls along the open coast in the mid-1990s yielded slightly lower but similar numbers of corbina to those obtained during a similar study in the mid-1950s. In addition, angler catch-per-unit efforts during the 1980s and the 1990s were similar to those in the mid-1960s, although annual catch estimates were much lower in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Annual catch per unit effort generally increases following increases in water temperature, such as during El-Niño/Southern Oscillation events. The population appears to be sustaining itself under present catch levels.

Home Range/Migratory Patterns:

Very little is known about the home range and migratory patterns of corbina. Limited tagging studies indicate that corbina do not move around much and they have no discernible migratory pattern. The greatest distance traveled was 51 miles. However, there is speculation that they seek warmer water in the winter by moving south, into bays or perhaps offshore.

Current Regulations:

No commercial take is allowed. It has been illegal to take corbina with nets since 1909, and illegal to buy or sell them since 1915.

California corbina are reserved for the recreational fishery. The recreational daily bag limit for corbina is 10, and there is no size limit.

Although the population appears to be sustaining itself under current regulations, continued colder water in the Southern California Bight may result in a reduction of the local corbina population. The current daily bag limit of 10 fish per angler does not increase protection for this species since most anglers rarely catch five or more corbina per trip. Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey and anecdotal data indicate that many smaller, immature corbina are caught and kept by anglers. A size limit may help to ensure adequate numbers of sexually mature fish.

How MPAs May Help:

Due to limited knowledge regarding movements and other life history parameters, it is unclear how reserves would help corbina. Corbina are mostly found in groups of several individuals, with larger fish being more solitary. Reserves would need to

encompass large shallow, sandy areas since most corbina are found in this habitat. However, this may not protect spawning individuals since it is believed that they spawn farther offshore.